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AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED ON THE

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

BATTLE OF NEW-ORLEANS,

AT

GOFFSTOWN, JANUARY 8, 1829.



BY CHARLES GORDON ATHERTON,
OF DUNSTABLE, N. H.



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ORATION.



We have assembled, this day, my Fellow-Citizens, to commemorate an event important in its consequences to the well-being of this Republick. Let us hope that our coming together may not be in vain. Let no man deride it as an occasion of empty show or useless festivity. By reverting to the deeds of valour performed by our countrymen, patriotism is confirmed. By the meeting and congratulations of those embarked in a common cause, the cord of sympathy which ought ever closely to bind together the hearts of freemen, is strengthened. By testifying that we remember services enacted for our benefit, and by setting the seal of falsehood on the calumny that republicks are ungrateful, we kindle the love of country afresh in every true bosom, and incite all, whenever occasion shall offer, to imitate the examples of those whom we delight to honour. We come here to pay our tribute of thanks to those Patriots and Heroes who have risked all for our good—who thought no privations too great to endure—no dangers too imminent to dare for their country. We come here to express our grateful sense of the high desert of the man whose matchless vigilance, activity, prudence and bravery enabled our countrymen to gain a triumph which has never been surpassed by any recorded in history. We come to celebrate the great military victory of the eighth of January, achieved heretofore by the illustrious JACKSON, and we also come to rejoice in the moral victory—bloodless and peaceful, but still more glorious which he has lately won by the powerful suffrages of a free and mighty people.

The circumstances attending the battle of New-Orleans, are so well known to all, that it will be useless to dwell upon them long. When it was supposed that New-Orleans, the emporium of the commerce of the West, and the key of an immense and wealthy territory, was to be attacked, Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson, then on duty at Mobile, though he had, for a long time been enduring such fatigue as seemed to render repose necessary, started for that city. He arrived on the first day of December, 1814, under circumstances calculated to depress the stoutest heart. No confidence could be placed in a large portion of the population, composed of Spanish, French and English who were bound to our government by no ties of affection. There was no sufficient supply either of arms or of men. There were neither numbers to overpower our enemy, nor was there discipline to compensate the

deficiency of numbers. In the city, corruption was busy with its arts ; many were directly hostile to his success, and many basely indifferent under what government they might be doomed to live, so their property and fortunes could be protected from harm. All was a mixture of confusion, selfishness, supineness, imbecility and dismay. But though his body was worn by exhaustion, and though he perceived fully the difficulties he had to encounter, his spirit quailed not. Nor did he at any time betray the least anxiety, but ever exhibited the most serene composure and assurance. His arrival produced a new era. His reputation had preceded him, and his presence served to inspire the doubting with confidence. His energy repressed the voice of discontent—his sagacity foresaw, and his prudence provided for all emergencies. His language to Gov. Clairborne sufficiently evinces the temper of mind with which he entered upon his work. "Remember" says he, "our watchword is victory or death ! Our country must and shall be defended. We will enjoy our liberty or perish in the last ditch" !

At last it was ascertained that the British force had landed. He determined, in order to produce an impression on their minds, to commence an attack immediately ; and the battle of the 23d of December was the result, which was productive of considerable loss to the enemy, and tended to animate and encourage our troops. But he was aware that he had to contend with veterans of the most perfect discipline, and undaunted valor, flushed with their recent glories in an other hemisphere, and recollecting that his troops were not only raw men, but far inferior in numbers to his opponents, and not only inferior in numbers, but badly provided with arms, he concluded to adopt a defensive system. And with such unremitting vigour did he toil in establishing his line of defence, that for five days and four nights he was without sleep and constantly employed. At length the morning of the ever memorable 8th of January came. The enemy commenced their grand attack, and advanced under cover of a thick fog to within a short distance of our entrenchments. Never was there a more regular and steady charge. When they were perceived, three cheers were given by our troops, and the work of destruction commenced. A continued volley of artillery and small arms pouring with destructive aim upon them, mowed down their ranks with tremendous execution. The leaden messengers of death were showered upon them in one unremitting storm. Still did their brave and devoted, but illfated men press on ; and some even succeeded in gaining our ditch where they were made prisoners after the battle. But the horrors which met them were too great for human endurance. They wavered and receded. Their general, in endeavoring to lead them on again to the charge, fell. After

several vain attempts to rally, they were obliged to retreat, leaving the field literally covered with dead and dying. The merit of a great commander consists in doing the greatest harm to an enemy, with the least to himself. Of the British, there were killed, wounded, and prisoners, about 2600—while the Americans lost in killed and wounded, but 13 men! Here the proud veterans of England, confident of success, with “beauty and booty” for their watchword, were compelled to flee before a body of raw American troops, one third their number “like sheep before the lion’s whelp.”*

Before the battle, as General Jackson was on his march through the city to meet the enemy, he was interrupted by the cries and lamentations of innumerable females who dreaded the impending danger. Feeling for their distresses, and anxious to quiet them, he directed Mr. Livingston, one of his aids, to address them in the French language. “Tell them” said he, “not to be alarmed. The enemy *shall not enter their city.*”—And most gloriously did he keep his word. “Nor is his fame limited to a single enterprise.” This, though the most important, is only one of many that have adorned his career.—In every thing which he has undertaken, he has shewn a mind equal to every emergency, and patriotism which nothing could repress or chill. And you well remember the modesty which he exhibited on receiving the congratulations of admiring thousands on his return to the city he had protected from the outrages of a brutal soldiery, attributing his success not to himself, but to the kindness of an overruling Providence. You well know the moderation which he displayed. Though a conqueror flushed with victory, though receiving the thanks and almost the adoration of the people, who would have shed their blood for him, he submitted, in quiet magnanimity, to the decision of Judge Hall, he stilled the indignant murmurings of the assembly, and taught by example what has never been so forcibly taught by words, “that submission to the civil authority is the first duty of a citizen.”

In discharging the honorable trust of addressing you, this day, I have thought it proper not to consume the time for which I am to tax your attention, in the relation of historical facts with which you are familiar, nor in caviling encomiums on him who needs not praise, and would despise adulation.—This victory was one obtained by an army of freemen, over the mercenaries of a king ; and this occasion naturally leads to some remarks on the progress of liberal political principles—the effect of our example on other nations—the causes of the decline of other republics—the methods by which alone our freedom may be preserved unimpaired, and last, on the glorious triumph of the principles of democracy in the late

*For the facts of the preceding account, the author is indebted to memoirs of Jackson compiled by a citizen of Massachusetts.

election. These, therefore, are the principal topicks to which I ask, to-day, your indulgent attention.

Not only on the annals of our Revolution connected with the principles of freedom, but liberty is the beginning, the end, the substance of all our history. It is entwined and embodied with all the events that mark our progress—it is written in characters that can never be effaced on every page of our story—it is interwoven with all that we have been, all that we are, and all that we hope to be. Our forefathers came to this land seeking refuge from oppression. Despised and insulted by the haughty arbiter of the old world, that meek and suffering, but hardy and faithful band brought to inhospitable and savage shores their household goods, their principles, their hopes. They were wafted hither by no prosperous gales of royal favour :—no lofty patronage protected their humble troop. The same spirit which led them here—which supported them under trials and privations almost insupportable—which nerved their souls against the attacks of hunger, want and savage enemies,—this same spirit flowed down to their descendants, and became a part of their being. It was the same spirit which in them prompted resistance to unwarrantable assumptions on the part of the parent country, and the renunciation of an allegiance that no longer promised protection. It was the same spirit that throughout their struggle nerved their arms and braced their souls, and led them to resolve, to use the words of one of their most able writers,* “ that wheresoever, whensoever, and howsoever they might be called to make their exit, they would die freemen”! But let not our selfishness confine the effect of the events of our history, and the consequences of our revolution and its glorious termination to ourselves alone. It is a lesson and an example to the world. With the sight before their eyes of a free representative government, men will not long submit to any other ; they will not long consent to be yoked and driven like beasts. This is an age of inquiry and of knowledge. It is impossible that the general advance of information should be checked. It is as much out of the power of tyranny to stop the progress of discoveries in government as of any other discoveries fraught with happiness to human nature. However many a momentous truth may have been, for a time, through dread of persecution, locked up in the bosom of its discoverer, however it may have been mangled and repressed by those who feared its power, however it may have been, in the person of its finder, confined in dungeons and loaded with chains—still truth is great, and must ever, in the end, prevail. The greatest improvements—the most important discoveries have, at first, been viewed with incredulous scorn, or met with grinding persecution by the rulers of the world. The divine Author of our religion was spurned, and insulted, and died the death of a malefactor, but his doctrines are spread

* Josiah Quincy.

wide over the earth. Galiles was obliged to confess in the Inquisition that the earth did not move, but, to use the words he whispered when rising from his confession, 'it moves nevertheless.' The great and good men of our country,—such men as James Otis, Samuel Adams, Jefferson and Henry, were once called rebels and traitors; but now the leaden cheeks even of the minions of despotism would burn with shame, should their lips utter such blasphemy! And it is a noble reflection to the admirers of free principles, that all the greatest characters which have adorned human nature have arisen, and all the greatest deeds which have added lustre to history have been performed in behalf of liberty. "It is the cause" which animates and inspires men to be great. It was this which, in our country, raised up men to vie with the skillful and more practised statesmen of older nations, and to meet, in the field, the veteran warriors of England. It was this which caused genius to start into life in all parts of our land. It was this which turned even feminine gentleness into courage, and caused woman, who before would shudder if the "breeze of summer visited her too roughly," to dare all things and endure all things for her country. This urged the gallant Lafayette to leave the bosom of friends and family, and the allurements of wealth and rank, to unite his fortunes with our destiny, then unpromising, but which gloriously resulted in the advent of

That hour when a voice had come forth from the West,
To the slave bringing hope, to the tyrant alarms,
And a lesson long look'd for was taught the oppress'd,
That kings are as dust before freemen in arms.

This induced the greatest bard of modern times, whose untimely fate the friends of liberty mourn, to devote his energies to the redemption of the land which had enriched his song, and which his song had hallowed. It was this which animated the lips of Demosthenes with that power and vehemence that have made him the wonder and the despair of all succeeding orators—this which gave its eloquent persuasion to the honied tongue of Cicero. It was this that made Chatham seem more than human when, at the time of our struggle, he dared to say in the British Parliament—"But were I an American as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my soil, I never would lay down my arms—no never!" This gave to Fox his matchless ardour and energy, which surprised into a momentary space of human feeling "the wire-drawn puppets, the deaf and dumb things of a Court." Let men have motives to urge them on, and almost any thing is within their reach. And what motive can be greater than the desire to obtain; for without this nothing is desirable. And as there always have, so there always will spring up great men, in trying times, to exert their might in the cause of human beings. And it is not fancy, but must ever be fact

That "freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won!"

With our example before them, the nations of the old world, who have long been oppressed by detestable priestcraft and dreary despotism, will feel their power and learn to use it. But it is said that the ignorant and half-brutalized population of Europe are not fit to govern themselves. Aye—and what renders them unfit? Is it an excuse for the tyranny that keeps them down, that it has already besotted them in ignorance and slavish fear? Well is it for the Despot to say to his harassed and broken-hearted subjects—"I have trampled you under my feet—I have crushed your spirits—I have locked you up in darkness and ignorance till you are unable to exercise the privileges of men, and therefore I will continue to oppress you—I will load you with more grievous burdens—I will bind you with heavier chains!"—No—God forbid that, because men, by a long course of slavery, have become almost unfit for the purposes of self-government, the inference should be drawn that they must ever continue slaves!

The advocates of despotick governments delight in quoting examples of popular misrule. They talk of treasuries rifled and granaries plundered by a populace—but what do they say of extortion that beggars, and monopolies that starve? They speak with abhorrence of the tumultuous disorder and the irregular license of a multitude—but in the same breath you hear them flattering the mighty authors of systematic violence and organized rapine and bloodshed, palliated in their eyes, by the glance of wealth and pomp of butt. Cruelty or outrage which they can in any way connect with democracy, to their delicate nerves is terrible indeed,—but the grinding oppression of an aristocracy, the oceans of blood-shed by despots—murders in form of law, proscriptions, imposts, confiscations and wanton inflictions and base cruelty—all these are nothing! It is nothing to them that so many noble spirits, whose only crime was to long for freedom, have been immured in dungeons to pine away their lives in loathsome decay—that the energies of whole nations have been repressed, (like those of Ireland at the present day)—that whole countries have been depopulated by the misery that follows the invaders march—that whole unoffending communities have been put to the sword by the eager ambition of despots! The fate of so many honest industrious poor, who struggle, in vain, to overcome undeserved but remediless misery—the woe of beings brutalized with slavery, and kept in ignorant vassalage lest they should learn to use their strength—the human mind degraded, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined"—opinion persecuted—conscience insulted—the blaze of faggots gathered round innocence—the massacres of women and children—the suffer-

ings of martyrs—all these, to them, are nothing!—Shew me one act of cruelty or injustice by mobs, and I will shew you an hundred by tyrants! And which is the more excusable—the uprising of human beings, with countenances savage with want, and eyes hollow and glaring with woe, to procure the necessaries of life—aye, or if you choose it, to drink the blood of their oppressors, or the regular march of a standing army in the employ of a tyrant—paid for murder, and proceeding on their bloody track to burn cities, to ravage countries, and to butcher alike young and old, male and female? Long enough have the despots of Europe kept their subjects in ignorance in order to preserve their own sway. Long enough have they lorded it over the consciences and birthrights of men. The divine right of Kings, which they have altered into the milder term legitimacy, will not do. “The right divine of Kings to govern wrong” is not a maxim for this bold, busy and inquiring age. There is a spirit abroad too dangerous to be trifled with. Its outbreakings have already been seen in various parts of the earth. If the masters of the old world yield to its progress, it may reform abuses gradually, as the waterdash wears the marble, and they may hide in obscurity their imbecility and their shame. But let them form themselves into alliances, and by combinations endeavor to preserve their sway, and “the overstrung nations will arm in madness.” Let them endeavor to breast and stop the tide of improvement which is rushing onward, and it will sweep them away in its mighty torrent. The murmurings of the storm are already heard in the forest—the sighings of the gusts of wind, and the groans of the laboring trees—if they prostrate themselves before the coming tempest, it may pass them untouched, unhurt; but woe to them who endeavor to brave it, for the angel of death will ride on its rushing wings. Reverses may ensue in the cause of freedom; hope delayed may sicken the souls of patriots, the exertions of heroes and martyrs may be, for a while, in vain—brave hearts may spill their best blood on the points of mercenary bayonets, but the cause of human nature and of God must triumph! I say the cause of God, for the Almighty has not placed the longing after freedom any more than the longing after immortality in our bosoms, that it should only, forever, be a source of disappointment and despair! Our history must inspire all. And it is curious to reflect that our forefathers, despised and insulted by the potentates of the old world, brought that here with them which shall react, nay, is reacting on their persecutors with tremendous energy. They came here “to plant the tree of life, to plant fair freedom’s tree,” which has grown up so large and beautiful, and will overshadow all the earth—the tree, which shall prove to the free of all nations a shelter and protection, but to tyrants and oppressors will be more deadly than the

Upas, which blasts and withers all who approach it. History has been resorted to, and it has been discovered that all Republicks have been shortlived. But it would not be difficult, did time permit, to show that the cause of their dissolution was not that they were in any degree Republicks, but that they were not purely so. The accumulation of vast estates, and the springing up of a wealthy, haughty and domineering aristocracy have always been the first causes of the evils that have followed. Here, the estate which the successful schemer or careful economist accumulates is divided and dissipated at his death in many directions, and the stream which, if suffered to increase, might carry ruin and devastation in its progress, being broken and dispersed into various channels, spreads over a wide surface, health and fertility. And it might seem that the frequent recurrence of our elections must protect us from all danger. Without doubt, this is one great source of safety—for, even in Great Britain, it was said by one of those* who, in the House of Commons, most uniformly and strenuously resisted the insidious encroachments of Sir Robert Walpole—"modern history, I believe, will inform us that some very dangerous attempts upon our liberty have been disappointed, not so much from the virtue of many in this house, as from the apprehension they may have had of an approaching election." Still, aristocracy is that from which we have most to fear. Let me not be misconceived. In the remarks which follow I wish not to be understood as intimating that there is, in our country, any party, the individuals of which are all aristocratical in manners, conduct and habits, nor that there is any party exempt from such individuals. I am speaking of political opinions and their tendency. And I do think that there is a body of men in the community whose political opinions aim and tend towards aristocracy—that is, to place power in the hands of a few, and take it from its only safe depository, the great mass of the people.

The principles of aristocracy is the one which is most directly and inveterately at war with that of democracy. This is the subtle enemy which has been the ruin of all former Republicks. Nothing can be more active, more insidious or more fatal. Nothing is less apt to alarm in its first advances, but nothing is more tremendous in its final results. It is ever on the alert, watching all occasions, and improving all opportunities—it is vigilant, and never slumbers—it is restless and ever in motion—it has the eyes of Argus, and the hands of Briareus. It is busy in many Protean shapes, and disguises itself in various perplexing forms. It is sometimes so impalpable that the keenest vision can scarcely discover it, and often so intangible that when we grasp at it we have a shadow; and it is still carrying on, elsewhere, its work of destruction. It assumes, by ingenious construction, powers

* Sir John St. Aubin.

which the constitution never gave. It would make the representative independent of his constituents, and attempts in various ways to inculcate the impression that there are some who have a kind of indefeasible right to office from circumstances independent of real merit or fitness therefor, and a right to continue in office, however alarming the manner in which they obtain it. It is even endeavoring, now boldly and with virulence and threats, and now silently, secretly and insidiously, to gain its darling objects. It is never more dangerous than when it drugs its foes with opiates—to lull them into a pleasing confidence and security—to persuade them that all goes on prosperously, and that he who sees danger in any proceeding is a disturber of the public quiet and a discontented brawler, whose mouth, for the sake of the general harmony, should be shut. It strives to give a healthful appearance to the wounds it inflicts, but

“It will but skin and film the ulcerous part,
While foul corruption mining all beneath,
Infects unseen.”

It endeavors to keep out of view its machinations, and to divert attention from the real danger by raising false alarms, or by dazzling the beholder by some splendid scheme, some bold fancy, some visionary theory, some specious yet delusive plan. In this, it is like one who should pretend to be actuated by friendly motives, and should treacherously lead a consumptive patient abroad in the deceptive eve of summer, when all is cool and fragrant and grateful to the sense, and bid him admire the calm stillness and beauty of the scene, and tell him to gaze on the stars shedding down their beams from the blue canopy above, and to listen to the breeze sighing through the foliage of the forest, and to view it crespings the silver surface of the lake, and bid him do all this to prevent him from recollecting that the damps of disease were descending with the dew—that the air, which seemed balmy and sweetly to kiss his cheek, contained infection in its touch, and that, with every breath, he was drinking in the noxious vapours of decay and death.

The only condition on which liberty is granted to man is that of perpetual vigilance. This subtle spirit of oppression must be met in its first approaches—it must be guarded against with ever anxious care. Man cannot procure any thing of importance unless by striving for it, nor can he retain any thing worth having, unless by guarding it. The husbandman, before he can expect the earth to yield its increase, must prepare it by his toil; and, after his stores are gathered, his care is still necessary to preserve them. The accumulator of property, when he has amassed wealth, if he would not lose all the fruits of his labour and anxiety, must still be ever on the alert lest it vanish, and all his fond hopes be prostrated. No

other blessing can we expect to enjoy long without activity and care on our part, and why should we expect that liberty, the greatest of blessings, can be retained without either? Why should we imagine that, because we now have liberty, we must always possess it, however supine we may be? If freedom is worth fighting for, it is worth preserving. Let us never listen to the voice which would calm all our apprehensions, and lull us into slumbers of security—into a quiet, which might be repose indeed, but would soon be the leaden sleep of despotism.

To prevent the people from punishing a disregard of their will manifested by them to whom it ought to be a guide, we sometimes have heard such sort of expostulations as these—“It makes no difference to you who is in office—the government goes on well—why make a disturbance? No, let us sit down in quiet ease and indifference. True, the will of the people has been, in some measure, slighted by their representatives, but we had better bear a little wrong than produce any discord, or raise the voice of discontent. True, the spirit of the constitution has been, in some degree, violated, but contested elections occur so often that they leave us no peace—they are a continual source of confusion, and they may result, at last, in violence and blood-shed.” How base is his spirit—how grovelling his mind, who can reason thus! As well might the mariner, bound on a voyage of profit to a distant land, pray for the dull dead calm when the sail would hang lazily against the mast, and the sluggish atmosphere lay like lead on the surface of the water, and deprecate the coming of the breeze in craven fear, lest the breeze might swell into the tempest! Such was not the reasoning of our fathers when they resisted the first pretensions of England to unwarranted powers. Theirs’ was not the rising up of slaves under the encroachments of their task-masters, but that of freemen “snuffing from far the tainted gale of tyranny.” Such were not the sentiments of one of the most eloquent advocates of liberty across the water.* His words were, on the subject of the famous Middlesex election, “The Constitution at this moment stands violated. If the breach in the constitution be effectually repaired, the people will of themselves return to a state of tranquillity; if not, may *discord prevail forever!*” Such is not the language of freemen, at any time, for well they know that every precedent, gained on the part of oppressors, is, to those oppressors, “a tower of strength”—that it is made a pretence for new claims and renders easier the way to fresh usurpations.

The reflections which have preceded, lead us to remark on the causes which affected, and the circumstances attending the late election. We have reason to rejoice, my friends, in

Lord Chatham.

the assurance which the result gives us, that the sentinels of American liberty do not sleep upon their posts, and that the American people are vigilant and active—keen to discover the first symptoms of violations of their rights, and quick to punish aberrations from duty in their agents. It is well known to you that, in the election preceding the late one, Gen. Jackson had more of the electoral votes than either of the other candidates, and that Mr. Adams was elected by the House of Representatives. Mr. Adams was elected by the votes of the Representatives of States, the people of which preferred Gen. Jackson to him. And no honest man can deny that these representatives must have been aware of that fact. Neither can any one doubt that these representatives were influenced by him, who, after the election, accepted the first office in the gift of the President. Was there nothing alarming to republicans in all this?—And here let us pause, for a moment, to consider one of the charges which have been preferred against him whom the people of this republick have pronounced worthy of their highest honors. If his temper were, as has, by some, been represented, ferocious and ungovernable; his disposition that of a military despot—if he held of no importance the constitution of his country, and disregarded all the dictates of patriotism and the salutary restraints of law—if his desire were only to gain power by any methods and all means—if his nature were so hasty and irritable—his anger so tremendous and raging—when—when, I say, would these have been so likely to have manifested themselves, as when the will of the people, clearly understood and believed, was set at defiance, and John Quincy Adams placed in the presidential chair, by management and intrigue over him! This was an occasion when even a mild man might have been pardoned some excitement, and the most prudent man some excess of feeling. Then, if ever, would the aspiring military chief have rallied his followers around him, and pointed them to the station of which he might have represented himself as unjustly deprived. Then, if ever, would the disappointed ambitious soldier have called together his partizans, and have told them; “The spirit of the constitution has been violated; I have been corruptly and wrongfully cheated of those honors which the American people would have bestowed. Corruption has crept in among our rulers and dwells in our high places, and there is need of a vigor stronger than law. Let us take the constitution, and law into our own hands, and see that they are no longer insulted.” What, on this occasion, were the demonstrations of his anger—where was the rage of disappointed ambition—where his agonies of phrenzied passion—where his threats—where the volcanic eruptions of fury from a bosom big with schemes of revenge and destruction? Where were his curses—where his invocations of “war pestilence and famine” on those who had basely disre-

garded his claims? Never was there any occasion when the passions of a man, at all irritable, would have been more likely to burst forth. How, then, was he, that distinguished and great man, whom the slanderers and hired scribblers of the present day have denounced as the most savage of monsters and ferocious of tyrants? He was calm and unmoved. Neither by word or deed did he manifest the least chagrin or resentment. He preserved the serenity of a philosopher, and the dignity of a Roman. Soon after the election, he was seen in the thronged halls of festivity, followed by the regards of all—"the observed of all observers"—and from his bearing no one could have supposed that any thing had occurred calculated to ruffle his spirit. And, with grace and ease that a courtier might envy, the illustrious farmer of Tennessee went up to his successful competitor, and, extending to him his hand, congratulated him on his election. Shame on you, ye defamers—ye who assassin-like attack the reputation of him who is your benefactor—where is your shame, when you accuse this man of violence, and ferocity, and ungoverned passions! It is enough to make one blush for his country to reflect on these attacks! It is enough to make one regret that he possesses the same nature with those who are base enough to join in the "common cry of curs!" When we consider the circumstances under which the present administration came into power, and their course since, we cease to wonder that the republican party, as a party, have been opposed to it throughout the United States. Nor is it astonishing that an administration getting into place against the will of the people and commencing their course with the doctrine that a representative ought not to be "palsied by the will of his constituents," should have received the support of that party whose seditious and unprincipled course during the last war had nearly ruined the country—whose constant aim seemed to be to embarrass our government and bring disgrace upon our land, and who as many of them probably grieved at Jackson's triumph at New-Orleans, now, also regret his recent victory. Will any one be so hardy as to deny that, in this State, the federalists, as a body, have been the supporters of the present administration, and the republicans, as a party, opposed to it? No one, at least, can deny that the administration party, here, is composed of a large majority of federalists, united with a few who have been separated from the body of republicans. Yet have they assumed the name of the republican party! How do they obtain their right to this title? Do they acquire their republican character from their larger constituent part—their majority, who have always been federalists? Certainly not. Do they acquire their republican character from their smaller constituent part—their minority, composed of a few who formerly acted with the republican party, and who are so deeply imbued with the quintessence of republicanism

that "this little leaven has leavened the whole lump?" This cannot be. Is it this minority, themselves, who are the republican party? As well might a few stragglers call themselves the main body of an army.—But they say to us; "you have left us—we all supported Adams a few years since, and in that spot we are still." There is just as much reason in all this, as there would be in the conduct of a single company, who, in the onward march of an army, have lagged lazily behind, and yet should call themselves the army, and the main body deserters?

It is a fact that there were many—very many, here, who at the election of 1824 did not prefer the candidate who succeeded. But, if they did prefer him before that election, it was no reason why they should support him for another, when the very circumstance of his election, and the doctrines avowed by him and his party since, prove him unworthy the support of any republican. Because we have supported a man once, must we ever continue to do it? Can a publick man never become, by his own acts, unworthy of confidence? Alas! the world has ever been full of melancholy instances of corruption, and of the prostration of genius and of honor at the shrine of power. And it is afflicting to observe that those who have formerly been the advocates and champions of liberty, and afterwards proved treacherous to her cause, have ever been the most suppliant sycophants, the readiest of all, to "cringe and bow and bend the knee,"—the loudest in the senseless cry against all improvements as innovations, the most virulent in their abuse and malignity, and the foremost in the pack to hunt down their former associates. But how fallen and how powerless do they appear in comparison with what they were—their energy, their soul is gone! How different is that Burke who raised his voice in behalf of suffering millions in India, and in behalf of the oppressed every where, and mocked at the "hoary head of inveterate abuse," from him who lived on a pension; raved out his anathemas against liberty—adored all villany and injustice which had antiquity to sanction them! How different is that Henry Clay who exclaimed, that in whatever manner he might learn the will of his constituents, he would always obey it, and who sent forth his elegant and heart-stirring notes in favor of freedom from him whose fatal influence induced the representatives of the people to betray their trust—from the impious madman at Baltimore, and the subdued apologist at Cincinnati!

During the late contest, we have been met, in our arguments, only by abuse, misrepresentation, and insults and irrelevant replies. We said the spirit of the constitution had been broken, and we were told, that the letter had been obeyed.—We said that the representative had set himself above his constituents, and we were told that our party was in favour of a military despotism. We said that the administration came

into power against the will of the people, indicated by circumstances that could not be mistaken, and we were asked whether Mr. Adams was not a "practised statesman" and had not administered the government well. We said that these representatives who had betrayed their trust had been rewarded for their treachery, and we were told that the machine of government was still in motion,—as once, in the British parliament, the fact that the house of commons were still debating in their old forms was adduced by one of the worshippers of power,⁸ as an argument of national prosperity. We said that a system of favoritism and patronage, applied for gaining popularity, was expending the money of the people, and we were told that some of the national debt had been paid.—Many boasts have we heard concerning this—which takes place by operation of law. Paying the national debt ! As well might the administration take to themselves the credit that, through their means, we live in a free country, and under a free constitution. As well might they say that through them we have abundant seasons ; that the plant springs, that the fruit ripens—that the shower descends—that the sun shines through their agency alone ! How unfair is their course who resort to such arguments—arguments, which can be only used with an intention to deceive. We have always offered, as the great reasons for opposing Mr. Adams, the means by which he at last obtained his seat—the doctrines of his inaugural address, his assumption of unwarranted power, and the manifest attempts of his administration, by patronage, to make themselves popular, and his journeying, dinner-eatings, speech-making, partizan cabinet. How disingenuous and unmanly are the attacks on those of our party who were in favor of Mr. Adams in 1824, accusing them of inconsistency ! How unfounded—how malignant, how base are the virulent aspersions on the two representatives of the republican party from our State, in Congress, and on a firm republican who was on the Adams electoral ticket at the prior election ! But it might have been expected from a party, the history of whose course is enough to make one mourn the degeneracy of our nature. The same violence has been exhibited, the same methods pursued, the same system of detraction and slander followed, as by those who formerly opposed the great and illustrious Jefferson. And as they now shrink from all imputations of hostility to that great and good man, and, in their desperate eagerness to avoid the accusation, even deny their names—as they, before his death, went on pious pilgrimages to his residence, and now weep tears of shame and contrition over his grave—so will it be hereafter with those who have so industriously reviled the Hero of New-Orleans. The States, without any exception, which formerly voted for Jefferson have now voted for Jackson, and the States which voted for the first Adams have now voted for the second. What more con-

vincing proof can be given that the parties are the same in nature, object, aim, character? But, it is said, some, who were formerly in the federal ranks, are now enlisted under the Jackson banner, and on the other hand, some, who were formerly in the democratic ranks, are now among the friends of Adams. And do not the individuals of parties often shift their course? What does it prove? Not that the parties have changed, but that those individuals have either changed, or are misled and deceived. The question is not where are a few individuals, but where is the multitude—not where are the stragglers, but where is the main body. It has been the lot of some individuals of this State to have changed in times past—passing over later occurrences. Will they pretend that it was not *they* who changed from federalism to democracy, but the party that came round? When he, who is soon to be honoured with the title of Ex-president, left his old friends the federalists, accusing them of treachery to their country, and branding them as traitors—did the party he joined become federal because he had joined it? Did the party he left become republican? The common sense of every one will furnish a reply. Let us never be deluded by names, nor under their influence. We can only judge of men by their actions. The moment they cease to act as becomes republicans, that moment, they cease to belong to the republican party. Further—are the principles which have been insinuated and openly avowed by the supporters of the administration, such as republicans can approve? It has been often said by them that all the men of wealth, the friends of peace and good order, and the respectable part of the community, are with them.—What is this but an intimation that there ought to be privileged orders, and that they ought to have the power of electing the chief-magistrate? and that the body of the people ought to be deprived of the right of suffrage, not knowing how to use it? If it means not this, it means not any thing. Is this republicanism? It has been more than intimated that a representative ought not to be “palsied by the will of his constituents,” and an administration, getting into place against the will of the people, has endeavored by patronage to secure continuance in power. Is this republicanism? Since the late election, and before the result of the votes of the West was heard, it has been hinted in many of their public prints, that some of the electors chosen by the people to vote for Jackson, would vote for a third candidate—and this result has been openly desired as it was then supposed that this would bring the election again into the house of representatives, and afford our President and Secretary another opportunity of displaying their “talents at negotiation,” and their acquaintance with the intrigues of foreign courts. Is this republicanism? The electors of Pennsylvania, chosen by 50,000 majority to vote for the

Hero of New-Orleans, have been called upon by a journal,† the organ of the administration at the seat of government, to vote for some other person. Yes, I repeat it, the electors of Pennsylvania have been called upon to betray a sacred trust confided to them by the people of their State, and by 50,000 majority ! Is this republicanism ?

But why answer these questions ? For, once establish such principles and our liberty is but a mockery, and to call ourselves freemen—an empty boast ! Why answer these questions ? They are already answered. The people—the people have proclaimed, in a voice of thunder, that this administration has not and never had their confidence. Never was there a triumph more complete, more overwhelming than has been, at the late election, that of the Hero of New-Orleans ! *His* triumph did I say ? No ! I mistake—it is the triumph of the republican principles—the triumph of the republican party—the triumph of the people. It is a proud proof to the world that Americans are vigilant, as were their fathers, in the great cause of freedom, that they are not to be deceived by misrepresentation, nor duped by falsehood, nor corrupted by prosperity, nor purchased by power. It has given assurance that the star of liberty, which has arisen here in the west, to which the free of all people gaze with straining and with aching eyes, is not destined to be dimmed by the noxious vapours of decay and corruption, but will shine forever with its peaceful, calm, undying lustre. In glorying in this result, we cannot forget that the attention of all nations is upon us. It remains for us to disprove the doctrine, which says:

“This is the moral of all human tales—
 ’Tis but the same rehearsal of the past—
 First freedom, and then glory—when that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last.”

This is the first specimen of a purely popular representative government. Here the experiment is for the first time fairly on trial, whether man is fit to govern himself. If it fail here—if the exertion of our great minds, if the struggles of our heroes shall have been all in vain—if all the blood which has been spilt shall have been drunk up by the thirsty earth unheeded, if the prayers of the free and faithful throughout the world shall have been all for naught, then may we well exclaim with the poet—“There is no hope for nations.”

We have supported Gen. Jackson, not because he has gained a battle, but because, through his whole splendid career, he has shown himself equal to every thing which he has undertaken : because he has ever displayed patriotism the most pure, sagacity the most unerring, bravery the most heroic, and a devotion to republican principles which nothing

†The National Journal.

could ever diminish or destroy. We have supported him because we believe that there are abuses to be corrected, and with us, the question is not whether they be great or small, but whether they be abuses. We believe him to be both able and willing to commence the work of reform. We are among those who think honesty, integrity and independence to be better qualifications for the office of Chief-Magistrate than a mere acquaintance with official forms, and a thousand of the evils of "practiced statesmen." From what we know of the character of Gen. Jackson, we believe that he will enter on his office with a firm resolution, a clear head, an honest heart and a sincere desire to obey the behests of the people. We may find ourselves mistaken, for it is but human to err. But this we do know, that any administration which has not for its foundation the confidence of the people, must like the present, speedily fall to the ground, and be scattered abroad in hopeless ruin.

Democratic Republicans,—You have been engaged in an arduous struggle. You have remained unmoved amid threats and revilings—and fearless amid the din of the conflict—you have held fast your integrity. The deceptive shouts of "New-England man" and "American System" have not been able to delude, nor has the senseless cry of "military chieftain" been able to frighten you from your duty—from your principles. You have been assailed by showers of abuse, and from none more copiously than from those who formerly called themselves your brethren. Your opponents have modestly arrogated to themselves all the talents, all the wealth, all the respectability, and all the religion in community. You may console yourselves by the hope that they will *still retain* all that religion which is founded on pious prayers for war, famine and pestilence on one's country—all that respectability which arises from slandered aged matrons—all that wealth which is the pay for prostitution and the price of falsehood, and all such sagacity as is evinced by their calculations on the late presidential election! You may also flatter yourselves that, with a majority of 15,000 of the people of this Republic on your side, you will be able to exist without asking much from the "forbearance" of the mighty and puissant friends and followers of this "stupendous" administration. You need stand in no great dread lest your opponents should continue the lines which they have heretofore threatened to draw, for should these lines be in danger of becoming obliterated, you may perhaps be willing to assist in stamping them with a more indelible character.

As I have already remarked, some who were formerly with you are now found with your opponents. But, to such of them as are truly republicans, the alliance is unnatural, and cannot long endure. They have been deceived and misled, and you will soon again, be found together. You have gained a victo-

ry glorious indeed. The Adams party, in the U. States, lies prostrate before you. A tremendous majority of the freemen of the country has overwhelmed them with defeat. The conqueror in war has conquered in peace. You have done your duty nobly. Let no one say that the twenty thousand who have, here, proclaimed their preference for the republican of Tennessee, have had no influence on his election. To the hardy sons of New-Hampshire, who have directed their steps across the western mountains, and who remember the birth place of their sires, this has not been in vain; and, more than this, there is an electric chain which binds together the souls, and connects the energies of the friends of truth and liberty of every region.

But your task is not yet done. Our prospects in the New-England states are far more cheering than were these of the supporters of Jefferson, at the close of the "reign of terror;" but New-England now, as then, remains to be regenerated. It is our pride that the friends of Jackson and reform are more numerous in this, than in any other N. England State. And as New-Hampshire has been the most reluctant to leave the great republican fold, so will she be the first to return to it. Nothing is necessary but that you go on as you have begun—nothing is needed but perseverance, union and energy. Do your duty to your party, to yourselves, and to your country, and be assured that the banner of Democracy shall soon, again, float proudly over your Capitol.





WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville Pa
Jan - Feb 1989
We're all here

